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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1995

PART III - EUROPE

Section 10 - Hungary

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-02934

III.10 HUNGARY

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee population

1. In 1993, the authorities reported the arrival of 5,366 asylum-seekers, 85 per cent of whom were from the former Yugoslavia. As Hungary retained the geographical limitation when acceding to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, it accepts applications only from asylum-seekers of European origin of whom 361 were recognized and 45 were rejected. By 31 December 1993, 2,978 Convention refugees lived in Hungary (2,138 from Romania, 643 from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 129 from Croatia, 16 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 52 from the former Soviet Union). The number of Croatian *de facto* refugees who have remained in Hungary since the signing of the 1951 Geneva Convention is estimated at around 40,000. The number of Romanian citizens of Hungarian origin who sought refuge in Hungary between 1988 and 1991 is estimated at around 30,000.

2. At the end of 1993, 8,000 individuals from the former Yugoslavia were receiving temporary protection in Hungary. As of May 1994, over 6,600 individuals (2,196 in centres and 4,467 in private accommodation) continued to benefit from government assistance. About one third are of Bosnian origin, one third ethnic Hungarians from Vojvodina in Serbia (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), and the remaining are Croats from the United Nations Protected Area East (UNPA) in southern Croatia, many of them also of ethnic Hungarian origin.

3. Due to the geographic limitation to the 1951 Convention, two separate eligibility procedures exist. UNHCR has direct responsibility for the status determination of non-European asylum-seekers and the provision of assistance to non-European refugees.

4. In 1993, some 500 non-Europeans approached UNHCR. The Office commenced eligibility interviews in 261 cases and recognized 16 cases (34 persons). A number of asylum-seekers left the country of their own accord before the eligibility determination process had been completed. By the end of 1993, 45 non-Europeans recognized as mandate refugees lived in the country (15 Afghans, eleven Iraqis, five Somalis, four Chinese, four Nigerians, two Mauritanians, and one from Ethiopia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon and Liberia, respectively).

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

5. With the exception of arrivals from the former Yugoslavia, the number of European asylum-seekers has decreased over the last few years. Hungary continues to be a transit country, and requests for asylum are often made only when individuals are apprehended while attempting to reach neighbouring countries.

6. Those recognized under UNHCR's Mandate are allowed to stay temporarily until a resettlement country is identified. In practice, however, Mandate refugees find themselves without prospects for long-term solutions. Integration into Hungarian society being extremely difficult, many opt to leave Hungary illegally. UNHCR is

engaged in a dialogue with the Government with the aim of obtaining, permission for recognized non-European refugees to be allowed to integrate in Hungary, despite the fact that the geographic reservation has not been lifted as of yet.

Programme objectives and priorities

7. UNHCR's primary objective is to reinforce the infrastructure concerning refugees by supporting the Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through guidance and training activities. UNHCR also continues to encourage the Hungarian Government to lift the geographical reservation to the 1951 Convention.

8. The electronic data registration system (Hungarian Tracking of Individual Cases System - HTICS) was introduced in January 1994. It is to be replaced towards the end of the year by the Hungarian version of the Central Eastern European Registration of Individual Cases System (CEERICS). In 1993, the Branch Office was given access to databases run by UNHCR's Centre for Documentation on Refugees.

9. While some refugees from the former Yugoslavia nurture the hope that repatriation will be possible, there are also many who view integration as a more realistic option. UNHCR's objective is to assist the Government in creating conditions conducive to integration. A request by UNHCR to grant work permits is being reviewed.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

10. The responsibility for the reception, accommodation and integration of European refugees lies with the Hungarian Government (the Bureau for Refugee and Migration Affairs within the Ministry of Interior). UNHCR will will continue to contribute to efforts aimed at local integration. The Hungarian Red Cross and Interchurch Aid are regularly involved in refugee work and have gradually assumed greater responsibility in providing social and legal counselling, and care and maintenance. In addition, UNHCR will encourage other NGOs to assist in projects related to the integration of refugees into Hungarian society.

11. The Hungarian Red Cross, in close cooperation with UNHCR, houses non-European asylum-seekers and refugees and assumes its own administrative support costs. An ecumenical organization, Hungarian Interchurch Aid, provides counselling for non-European refugees, and funds its own accommodation facility for refugees from the former Yugoslavia.

General Programmes

Care and maintenance

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

12. As the number of non-European refugees accommodated in the Red Cross reception centre doubled from 100 to 200, the increased costs had to be covered through a transfer between appropriations.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

13. As the geographical limitation was not lifted as anticipated, the care and maintenance programme had to continue. Funds were made available through a transfer between appropriations. Basic support to non-European refugees continued to be provided by two local NGOs. Health care, education and vocational training assistance was provided by the Bureau of Refugee and Migration Affairs. UNHCR will continue to place emphasis on institution-building activities and on refugee law and social services training to officials involved in refugee matters.

14. Supplementary health care and educational support to refugees from European countries have been incorporated into the care and maintenance project.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

15. Until such time as the geographical limitation is lifted, UNHCR will continue to provide for the reception, accommodation and integration of non-European asylum-seekers and refugees. As in the previous year, the project proposal includes a provision for assistance in health care, social counselling and education as well as legal assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers. A slight increase of the allocation will be necessary due to higher living costs.

Local Settlement

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

16. The local settlement project, designed to assist the Hungarian Government to integrate European refugees, was implemented as planned. UNHCR provided funds for health care, community services and education (including Hungarian language courses), and vocational training for refugees from European countries.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

17. Assistance to European refugees has been incorporated into the care and maintenance project.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

18. Given the uncertainty of being able to find durable solutions, all assistance has been incorporated into the care and maintenance project, and no allocation for local settlement is proposed for 1995.

Special Programmes

Care and maintenance of refugees from the former Yugoslavia

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

19. The care and maintenance project established in 1992 was designed to assist some 15,000 refugees. This programme continued in 1993 with a reduced number of beneficiaries and, consequently, a lower degree of funding. The $ 4 million project was targeted at 7,000 beneficiaries and provided food, medical and

educational assistance. The reduction of the caseload is due to the greater numbers of Croatians repatriating and the decrease in the arrival of new asylum-seekers.

20. The majority of the present beneficiaries arrived in 1991 and 1992, with only a small number registering in 1993. It is apparent that, although Hungary shares a frontier with several former Yugoslav republics, it is not a primary destination for those seeking temporary protection.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

21. The situation of those who received temporary protection in Hungary is increasingly precarious. Some individuals have already been in Hungary for two years and the prospects of return still remain remote. UNHCR is sponsoring a study to investigate the social and psychological needs of the refugees, with a special focus on women and children, to find ways and means of improving their condition. The project involves a consultant working in close cooperation with the Bureau for Refugee and Migration Affairs. Also, through the creation of a working group on social work activities, it is expected to transfer some responsibilities in this field to a local NGO. UNHCR assistance to the Hungarian Government for refugees from the former Yugoslavia is targeted at some 5,000 individuals.

(c) **Programme proposals**

22. If repatriation does not prove to be feasible, efforts will need to be directed towards local integration. UNHCR recommends a continuation of the care and maintenance programme for a projected 5,000 beneficiaries.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

23. Administrative support costs during 1993 were higher than expected, as staff members on leave had to be replaced by temporary assistance arrangements due to the heavy workload resulting from the supportive function of the Office as a transit point for the Special Operation for Former Yugoslavia. This expenditure was, however, slightly offset by savings resulting from the posts of Public Information Officer and Legal Officer not being filled for the whole year. The Government continued to provide rent-free premises.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

24. The need for an Interpreter/Translator was formalized by the creation of a post as of June 1994 until December 1995, to be funded under the Special Operation for Former Yugoslavia. Estimates for communications, operating expenses and travel of staff to provinces affected by refugee movements have been adjusted minimally. Amounts have been foreseen for the replacement of outdated office equipment.

(c) 1995 programme proposals

25. No major changes in direction are currently foreseen. Initial estimates are slightly lower for non-expendable property as purchases are expected to be made during 1994.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN HUNGARY

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
105.6	–	250.3 b/	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	289.5
10.2 a/	–	–	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	–
182.7	250.0	–	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	–
1.4 a/	–	–	RESETTLEMENT	–
–	–	294.7	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	273.6
299.9	250.0	545.0	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	563.1
233.5	216.2	47.8	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	35.5
533.4	**466.2**	**592.8**	**TOTAL (1)**	**598.6**
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
4,267.3	242.1	3,347.7	HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO DISPLACED PERSONS FROM THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA	4,030.0
–	–	287.3	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	293.7
			OTHER TRUST FUNDS	
154.4	235.9	61.2	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Junior Professional Officer	61.2
4,421.7	**478.0**	**3,696.2**	**TOTAL (2)**	**4,384.9**
4,955.1	**944.2**	**4,289.0**	**GRAND TOTAL (1+2)**	**4,983.5**

a/ obligation incurred against Overall Allocation
b/ allocated from the Overall Allocation